MORPHOLOGY: TREES, AFFIX ORDER, AND DERIVATION VERSUS INFLECTION

Ling 201
Alex Nyman (thanks to Jonathan)
Morphology
Let’s talk about the morpheme “re-”, i.e. [rij] or [ri]

These words are bad:
- resimple, recat, reblue, rehappy, reAngelOlsen, retwo

These words are good:
- redo, reanimate, reclassify, retie, reexcavate

What does this tell us about “re-”?
- It can only appear as a prefix on a verb.

We can write a morphological rule like this:
- Attach [rij] to the start of a verb to create a new verb.

On the homework, you don’t need to get fancy with the Right Hand Rule (you can, but don’t make mistakes)
Morphemes care about part of speech

- So we can’t say “re-simple” because “simple” ain’t a verb.
- But we can say this:
  - resimplify
- Why? We have “simple” and “re” in a single word, so shouldn’t this be bad?
- No, since the re attaches to the verb “simplify”
- This is a verb because of the following rule for “-ify”
  - Attach [ɪfai] to the end of an adjective to create a verb.
- The lesson here being...
Order matters

- The order you combine morphemes matters.
- You can’t combine “re-” with “simple”.
- For “re-” to coexist with “simple” in a word, you must first build a verb out of “simple”.
- That’s why we do the trees.
- Can somebody draw the correct tree for “resimplify”?
- Can somebody else draw the impossible bad tree for “resimplify” where the “re-” tries to attach to “simple” before the “ify”? 
Comprehension question: Swahili

- Here’s a verb in Swahili:
  - penda = like/love

- Swahili has a passive voice morpheme “-w-” which can be inserted before the last vowel in a verb.
  - pendwa = be liked/loved

- Swahili also has a prefix “m-” which can be stuck on a verb to create a noun meaning “one who verbs”:
  - mpenda = fan, enthusiast

- Draw a tree for the following word:
  - mpendwa = loved one, dear
Show how the following words are composed by our morphological rules using the “tree” notation. Be sure that you label the parts of speech of every morpheme and word, to the extent that you can. So, for instance, for the word [\texttt{Anduw}] the answer would be:

\[ \texttt{V} \]
\[ \texttt{??} \]
\[ \texttt{V} \]
\[ \texttt{\texttt{An}} \]
\[ \texttt{duw} \]

The “??” indicates that I cannot tell what part of speech “[\texttt{An}]” belongs to, but I know it has a part of speech, and the “Vs” indicate that “[\texttt{duw}]” and “[\texttt{Anduw}]” are verbs.

1. [\texttt{Ansijnk\o\$b}] 
2. [\texttt{risel\o\$b\|nes}] 
3. [\texttt{Anrij\o\$njk\o\$b}]
How do you know you have the correct tree?

- For this question, you have to draw some trees.
- How do you know you have the right tree?
  - (1) Can every branching node be a word?
  - (2) Think through the meanings node-by-node
- For the homework, (2) is really crucial.
- The prefix “un” can attach either to a verb or to an adjective.
- To get the right tree, you have to think about the meaning to see which it’s attaching to!
(2) Getting the right meaning

- For the homework, (2) is really crucial.
- *un*- can attach to a verb or an adjective
- So the rules give multiple ways of building some words:
  - *un* + verb + *able*
- To know which way is the actual one for a particular word, you have to think about its meaning.
- **The basic principle**: the meaning of a morpheme applies to the meaning of whatever it attaches to
(2) Getting the right meaning

- With *un-*-, you should know the following:
  - When *un-* attaches to an adjective, it means “not having that quality”.
  - When *un-* attaches to a verb, it means “to reverse the effects of that action”.
- I can’t really tell you more than that about *un-* without giving away the answer to the homework.
- So let’s look at an analogous example.
Thinking about meaning

- You can (usually) stick a bunch of words together to create a compound word:
  - breakfast, newspaper, watermelon, etc...
- The order these combine in affects meaning.
Inflectional vs. Derivational
Inflection and derivation

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- Others are **inflectional affixes**
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- Some ways of telling which is which:
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  2. Inflectional morphemes never change the part of speech, while derivational ones sometimes do
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Some ways of telling which is which:

1. Inflectional morphemes are more **productive** than derivational ones.
2. Inflectional morphemes never change the part of speech, while derivational ones *sometimes* do.
3. Derivational morphemes must all attach before any inflectional ones attach.
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  3. Derivational morphemes must all attach before any inflectional ones attach.
- Let’s go through these in detail.
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This fits with what we said before:

- The past tense morpheme is inflectional
- The [rij] morpheme is derivational
Changing the part of speech

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- We know this because, for example, when -er attaches to the verb *sing*, you get the noun *singer*.
- We also know this because -er isn’t very productive:
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We know this because, for example, when -er attaches to the verb sing, you get the noun singer.

We also know this because -er isn’t very productive:

*arrive-er, *die-er, *escape-er, *nosedive-er
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For example, English -er is derivational

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- We also know this because -er isn’t very productive:
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Warning!

- Be careful! Not all derivational affixes change the part of speech!
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- Affix changes part of speech $\rightarrow$ conclude it’s derivational
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- Be careful! Not all derivational affixes change the part of speech!
- The point is just that no inflectional affix can.
- Here’s a flowchart to guide your thinking:
  - Affix changes part of speech → conclude it’s derivational
  - Affix doesn’t change the part of speech → it could be derivational or inflectional (so try another test)
Morpheme order

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Consequently, you can’t attach -er to a past tense verb to mean “one who used to verb”.
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- Consequently, you can’t attach -er to a past tense verb to mean “one who used to verb”.